

In the Claims

Substitute claim 1 as originally filed with new claim 1 as follows:

1. (Once amended) A process of preparing a chemically bonded ceramic comprising:
 - (a) as a first step, preparing a slurry of solvent and hydroxide ceramic;
 - (b) as a second step, heat treating the hydroxide ceramic slurry at a temperature of between about 100 to 800°C to produce a dehydrated oxide ceramic;
 - (c) as a third step, impregnating the dehydrated oxide ceramic with a phosphating agent; and
 - (d) as a fourth step, heat treating the phosphate impregnated oxide ceramic at a temperature between about 200°C and about 1200°C to seal pores in the ceramic and produce a phosphated oxide ceramic.